2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

reversals) the Congress Election Board and some other parties have been careful to choose candidates who were Badagas, since this is the preponderant community in the Nilgiris. Until 1967 the electorate was clearly more interested in the candidate than his party's platform; but in 1967 this preference was reversed, owing to opposition party propaganda and the failure of earlier Congress representatives to satisfy educated young Badagas.

The first Badaga to enter provincial politics was H.B. Ari Gowder, a university-educated Gauda. His village was close to the European towns of Wellington and Coonoor, and his father (a former cowherd) was involved in lucrative construction work on the railway. Ari served for three terms as a member of the Madras Legislative Council before the Second World War and then had three terms in the Madras Legislative Assembly. He was defeated by a Congress candidate in 1946, but in 1952–1957 had another term as an Independent M.L.A. In his early political career he was an Independent but with leanings towards the Justice Party (which tended to support British rule and oppose the dominance of the provincial administration by Brahmins); and ever after he remained an Independent, despite a general sympathy among Badagas for the Congress movement. This man clearly achieved much political influence and perhaps charisma by entering public life in 1924 and capitalizing on the wealth and popularity of his father. Up to his death in 1971 he was undoubtedly more powerful among Badagas than their paramount chief.[19]

As Diagram 9 indicates, Ari Gowder's relatives followed him into the political arena. In the 1957 elections for the State Assembly his sister's husband was elected, and in 1962 the Communist candidate was his nephew; in the same year his brother's wife, the first Badaga woman to graduate, ran for Parliament on the Congress Party ticket and was elected. In 1967 she was defeated by a former Congressman, a well-educated Gauda from the Ke:ti area who represented the rightist Swatantra Party—the first time since Independence that a winning Badaga candidate was from a party other than Congress. In the State Assembly election of that year Congress also lost to an Independent and a D.M.K. (Dravidian Progressive) candidate (both Badagas). As a result the national Congress government, which the electorate held responsible for the poor rice ration, has been trying to regain favour with Badaga voters by locating in the Nilgiris during the later 1960s a German agricultural project, a

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

French-supported film factory and a protein products factory, supposedly to improve farm productivity and employ the pool of Badaga graduates.

MODERN LAWS

Certain pieces of legislation often regarded as milestones in the modernization of Indian society have affected the Badagas very little, and these we need review only briefly.

The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856, had no particular effect on Badagas since there was never any interdict against remarriage of their widows. The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937, has always been ignored by Badagas, and the women have never challenged their traditional treatment: the property is only inherited by males. Nor does the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, receive due recognition from Badagas: marriages are still not always monogamous and are sometimes contracted with grooms below eighteen or brides below fifteen. Kotas and lowland Harijans, although supposedly protected by the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, are never allowed into Badaga temples and are normally served with separate 'untouchable' glasses when they drink at a village teashop. People in Nilgiri villages may not be ignorant of such legislation, but there certainly remains some resistance to the idea of integrating the official system of law and administration into Badaga culture. Even more resistance can be found among the Todas, Kotas and Kurumbas.

NOTES

1. Meaning, respectively, Toda division, Western division, Europeans' division (from *ferangi*, 'Franks') and peak division (from Tamil *kuṉṟu*, 'mount'). Why one division should have been named after Europeans is not clear, unless it be a reference to seventeenth-century Jesuits who may have entered this area from Sattiyamaṅgaḷa and Me:ḻupa:ḷaya, where they were then active; Société des Missions-étrangères, 1933, vol. xii, 234-235. The name is certainly ancient. Grigg, 1880, 13, n. 1, and Macleane, 1893, 678, derive this name however from Tamil *periya Raṅga*, 'great god Raṅga,' who is worshipped in this area; see above, p. 127. Throughout the nineteenth century these territorial divisions were adopted by British administrators, but in 1882 they were superceded by the three *taluks* (Gudalur, Ootacamund, Coonoor) that are still recognized today.